

NEWS – CONGRESSMAN PETE STARK

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HHS REPORT: AS MANY AS 129 MILLION AMERICANS HAVE PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS

WASHINGTON- Today, the Department of Health and Human Services released a report showing that as many as 129 million Americans under 65 have what insurance companies consider a pre-existing condition. Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA) and Rep. Sander Levin (D-MI), ranking member of the House Ways and Means Committee, today highlighted the findings of this report.

Rep. Stark: **"The health reform law gives stronger coverage and more security to the millions of Americans with pre-existing conditions. For those with insurance, health reform will eliminate the risk that if they lose their job, they lose their health care. For those without insurance, the law is already providing options to help them find coverage.**

"Repeal would put insurance companies back in charge, rolling back existing patient rights and eliminating stronger protections in 2014."

Rep. Levin: **"The consequences of repeal couldn't be more clear: tens of millions of families would face the uncertainty of losing their health coverage because of a pre-existing condition. No one should face the prospect of being denied coverage or dropped from their health insurance plan over a pre-existing condition, yet that's precisely where this repeal bill leads us."**

Health reform is already helping people with pre-existing conditions, for plans starting after September 23, 2010:

- Insurers can no longer discriminate against children with pre-existing conditions;
- Insurers cannot establish lifetime limits on coverage;
- Insurers can no longer drop your coverage if you get sick;
- If you have a pre-existing condition and have been denied coverage, you may have access to a Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan in your state.

These state insurance plans will serve as a bridge to 2014, when insurance companies are

prohibited from denying coverage to all people with pre-existing conditions, or charging them higher premiums or cost-sharing.

The Republican proposal up for a vote in the House this week would repeal all of these provisions and replace them with nothing.

For the full report from HHS released today, please visit: www.healthcare.gov/center/reports/preexisting.html

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